

FORM B – BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Assessor's Number USGS Quad Area(s) Form Number

15-59 Orleans B EAS.165
NRDIS 1999

Town/City: EASTHAM

Place: (*neighborhood or village*): Eastham Center

Photograph



Locus Map



Recorded by: Eric Dray, Preservation Consultant, for

Organization: Eastham Historical Commission

Date (*month / year*): April 2025

Address: 2475 State Highway

Historic Name: Eastham Superette

Uses: Present: Commercial

Original: Commercial

Date of Construction: ca. 1939

Source: 1938 USGS aerial survey, 1940 US Census

Style/Form: Colonial Revival

Architect/Builder: Unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation: Concrete

Wall/Trim: Wood shingles/ Wood

Roof: Asphalt shingles

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

Large gable-front garage southwest of the Superette (late-20th c.)

Major Alterations (*with dates*):

Multiple additions, front porch roof, new windows

Condition: Good

Moved: no ☒ yes ☐ **Date:**

Acreage: 1.01 acres

Setting: This commercial property is located at the intersection of the State Highway and Samoset Road. Large aprons of asphalt parking surround the building on three sides. The surrounding area include the Town hall and Fire Station across the street, and 19th and 20th century dwellings along Samoset Road.

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☐ Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.

Use as much space as necessary to complete the following entries, allowing text to flow onto additional continuation sheets.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:

Describe architectural features. Evaluate the characteristics of this building in terms of other buildings within the community.

The earliest portion of this building, the 1 ½-story, side-gable main block, was built in ca. 1939. The one-story ell on the left (south) side may also have been original, but was in place by the mid-20th century. Subsequent one-story additions spanned around the rear (west) side of the main building. The original building is an example of the Colonial Revival style. The Colonial Revival style began in the late-19th century with a new interest in the country's own architecture of the Colonial-era and early Republic, and was a style that remained popular well into the 20th century.

The original appearance of the Superette is visible in a mid-20th century aerial view of Eastham Center (Photo 5). The building had the form and design reminiscent of a Full Cape, albeit at a larger scale. The front elevation originally consisted of storefront windows and a centered entrance. The entrance has since been relocated to a shallow addition on the right (north) side. The storefront windows have been altered and reduced; and a shed roof now spans the front elevation creating a covered enclosure.

The elevations are clad in weathered wood shingles with plain cornerboards. The roof is clad in asphalt shingles, and a large brick chimney rises from the center of the roof ridge. The front roof slope retains the broad shed dormer with gable dormers at each end which is visible in the early view (Photo 5). In addition to the storefront windows, fenestration includes modern, thermal 6/6 and 1/1 double-hung sash.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

Discuss the history of the building. Explain its associations with local (or state) history. Include uses of the building, and the role(s) the owners/occupants played within the community.

Incorporated as Nauset Plantation in 1646, and changed to Eastham in 1651, Eastham territory originally extended south to Pleasant Bay and north beyond Wellfleet Harbor. The early development pattern for what we now know as Eastham was impacted by its absence of deep-water harbor facilities. Relatively fertile soil led to dispersed agricultural settlement, but residential and commercial development was concentrated to the north at Wellfleet Harbor and to the south at Town Cove and Pleasant Bay. When the separate towns of Wellfleet and Orleans were created in the late-18th century, Eastham became and remained one of the least populated towns on the Cape throughout the 19th century.

In the 19th century, Eastham was the agricultural center of the Outer Cape. Crops evolved over time; corn and dairy were surpassed in the early-20th century by asparagus and turnips - two crops well suited for the sandy soil. In 1900, 58% of Eastham's workers were employed as farmers, but by 1930 that number had dwindled to 21%. Summer resort development, including cottage colonies and subdivisions of former farmland that would transform Eastham, had begun in earnest in the 1920s as middle-class access to car ownership increased and Cape roads were improved (indeed, portions of this property were taken for expansion of the State Highway).

The Eastham Center National Register District Nomination, prepared in 1999, provides the following summary of commercial activity following WWI in Eastham Center:

In the years between the two World Wars, the district shared in some of the summer resort development that characterized Eastham during that period. The windmill was an important tourist attraction, with regular grinding demonstrations until 1984. The attraction spawned related private commercial endeavors like Beatrice M. Barrett's Old Windmill Gift Shop and housekeeping cottages on Samoset Road across from the windmill. Mrs. Raymond L. Daley operated a bakery at her home, the Swift-Daley House (2375 State Highway, EAS.28), and also operated Daley's Cottages in the Pines at Cook's

Continuation sheet 1

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Brook Beach. The Eastham Superette established by Mr. and Mrs. Otis Barton in 1930 was probably the most important business of the period. Housed in an over-scaled Cape Cod cottage, it originally served as combination store and restaurant. The stone fireplace that remains today is a reminder of that early period. As postmaster as assistant postmaster, the Bartons also kept the Eastham Center Post Office in a rear wing. Following Otis Barton's death, Edward and Bernice Brown purchased the business in 1952, converted the restaurant to additional general store space, and added gas pumps and tourist cabins. In a 1954 vacation handbook, the Browns advertised the "Windmill Cabins \$5/cabin" in addition to "Groceries-Cold Meats-Frozen Foods-Magazines-Gulf Station-Snack and Dairy Bar." When the Browns curtailed this part of their business, several cabins were moved to Salt Pond Haven at Locust Road and State Highway; one was moved to the town landing and parking lot at the end of Dyer Prince Road on Rock Harbor where it now serves as an information booth.

The 1930 date in the National Register nomination for the Superette is derived from Assessor records. However, that date does not appear to be accurate. The United States Geological Survey (USGS) began conducting a series of Cape-wide aerial photographic surveys starting in 1938. In that first aerial survey, the cabins are shown, but the Superette itself had not yet been built (Photo 3). By the time the next USGS survey was conducted in 1952, however, the core of the current building was in place, as well as a gas station (Photo 4). An aerial perspective photograph taken around that same time shows the Superette (Photo 5).

The parcel on which the Superette was built was sold in 1933 by Abbie F. Smart of Eastham to Otis H. Barton.¹ As of the 1930 census, Otis Howard Barton (1894-1979) was living in a rented house in Attleboro, where he was born, with his wife, Bernice (1895-1973), and he was working as stock clerk for a jewelry factory. By the time the 1940 census was prepared, they were living in a rented house on Mill Road in Eastham, and they were both listed as proprietors of a general store, restaurant, and seasonal tourist camp. As can be seen in the 1938 USGS survey, only the cabins had been built by that time. If the general store and restaurant referenced in the 1940 census refers to the Superette building, then it would have been built sometime between 1939 and 1940.

As noted in the National Register nomination, the Bartons sold this business in 1952 to Edward J. and Bernice E. (Zemke) Brown of Manchester, NH.² Before moving to Eastham, Edward J. Brown (1916-2004) was working in Manchester as a sales manager for a bakery company. Edward and Bernice Brown conveyed this business to one of their three sons, David A. Brown, in 1992.³ David Brown conveyed it into an LLC he controlled in 2012, and in 2021 it was sold to a Lexington, MA-based LLC.⁴

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www.ancestry.com - Vital records.

¹ Barnstable County Registry of Deeds, Book 494/ Page 111.

² Book 805/ Page 428.

³ Book 8326/ Page 12.

⁴ Book 26236/ Page 350, Book 34715/ Page 307.

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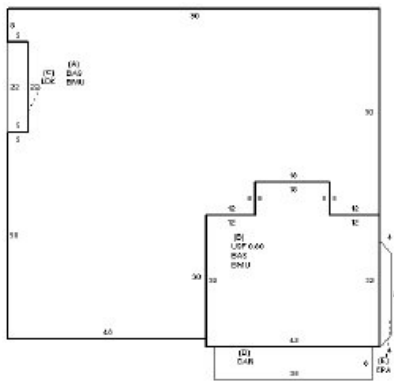


Figure 1. Assessor Sketch.



Photo 2. View looking northwest.



Photo 3. Detail of 1938 USGS aerial survey.



Photo 4. Detail of 1952 USGS aerial survey.

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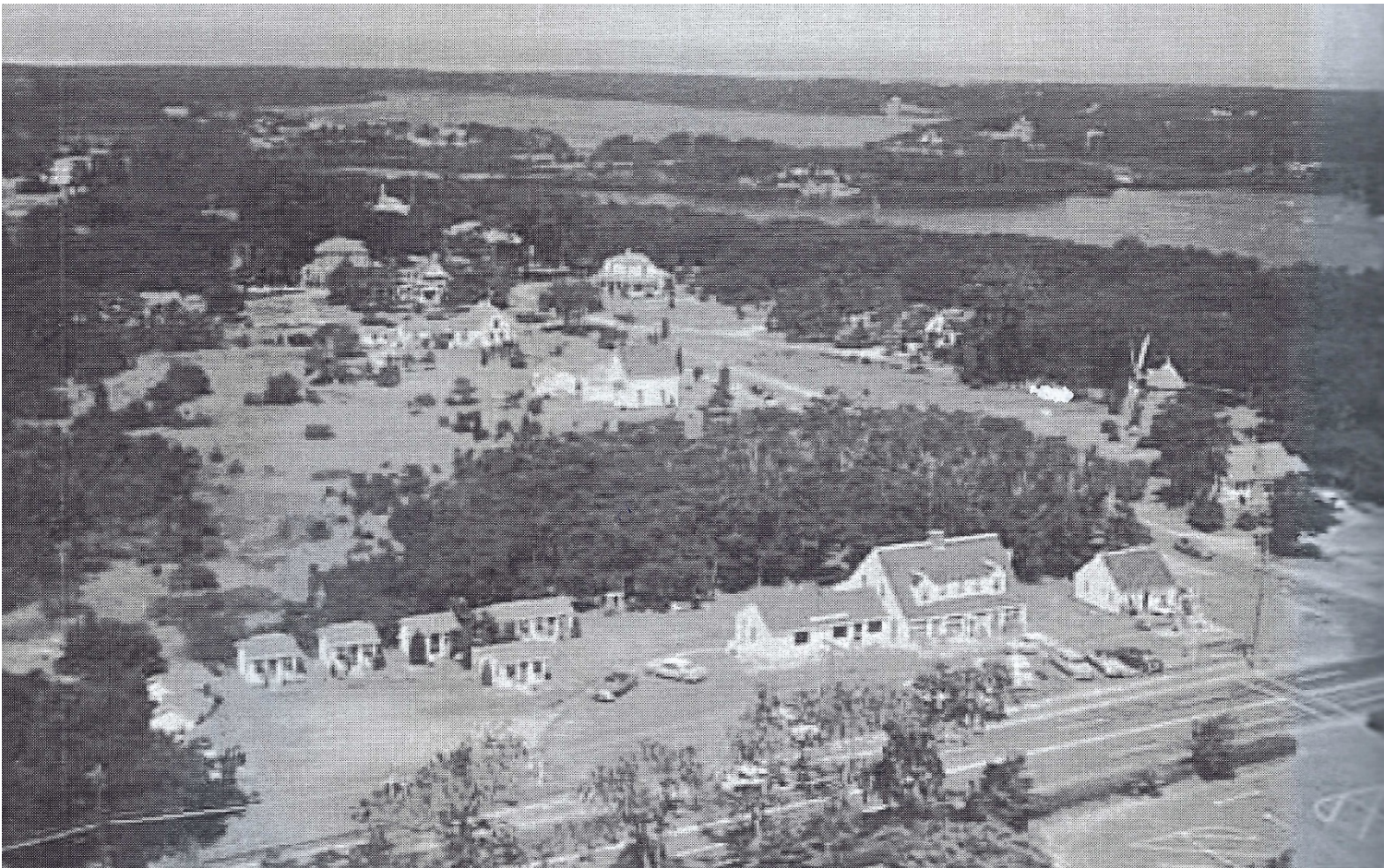


Photo 5. Undated (likely 1950s) view (Source: *Samoset Road-Cape Cod-USA*).